

Cayuga language

Cayuga (In Cayuga **Gayogohó:nq'**) is a Northern Iroquoian language of the Iroquois Proper (also known as "Five Nations Iroquois") subfamily, and is spoken on Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, Ontario, by around 240 Cayuga people, and on the Cattaraugus Reservation, New York, by less than 10.

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Use and language revitalization

Six Nations Polytechnic in Ohsweken, Ontario, offers Ogwehoweh language diploma and degree programs in Mohawk or Cayuga.^[3] Immersion classes in Cayuga are taught at Gaweni:yo High School, on the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve.^[4] The Cayuga language maintenance project was funded by the Canadian Government in 2010,^[5] and is being "carried out in partnership with the Woodland Cultural Centre."^[6] A Cayuga e-dictionary can be downloaded for PC or MAC, free of charge.^[7]

As of 2012, 79 people were said to be fluent speakers of Cayuga.^[4]

Dialects

There used to be two distinct dialects of Cayuga. One is still spoken in Ontario. The other, called "Seneca-Cayuga", was spoken in Oklahoma until its extinction in the 1980s.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Cayuga | <i>Gayogohó:nq'</i> |
| nid·wa·wə·nō:də | |
| Cayuga for "our language" | |
| Native to | Canada, United States |
| Region | Ontario: Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation; New York (state): Cattaraugus Reservation |
| Native speakers | 61 (2016 census) ^[1] |
| Language family | Iroquoian <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northern ▪ Lake Iroquoian ▪ Five Nations ▪ Seneca-Cayuga ▪ Cayuga |
| Language codes | |
| ISO 639-3 | cay |
| Glottolog | cayu1261 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/cayu1261) ^[2] |

Phonology

Modern dialects

There are two varieties of Cayuga. The Lower Cayuga dialect is spoken by those of the Lower End of the Six Nations and the Upper Cayuga are from the Upper End. The main difference between the two is that the Lower Cayuga use the sound [gj] and the Upper use the sound [dj].^[8] Also, pronunciation differs between individual speakers of Cayuga and their preferences.

Vowels

There are five oral vowels in Cayuga, as well as four long vowels, [i :], [a :], [o :], and [e :].^[9] Cayuga also has three nasalized vowels, [ẽ], [õ], and [ã].^[10] Both [u] and [ã] are rare sounds in Cayuga. Sometimes, the sounds [u] and [o] are used interchangeably according to the speaker's preference. After long [e :] and [o :], an [n] sound can be heard, especially when before [t], [d], [k], [g], [ts], and [j].^[10]

Vowels can be devoiced allophonically, indicated in the orthography used at Six Nations by underlining them.

| | Front | | | Back | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|------------|------|--------|------------|
| | Oral | Long | Nasal | Oral | Long | Nasal |
| High | /i/ | /i : / | | /u/ | | |
| Mid | /e/ | /e : / | /ẽ/ /ẽ : / | /o/ | /o : / | /õ/ /õ : / |
| Low | | | | /a/ | /a : / | /ã/ |

[11]

Long vowels

Length is important because it alone can distinguish two completely different meanings from one another. For example:

[ha?se?] you are going

[ha?se :] you went^[12]

Devoiced vowels

Following are some words that demonstrate what some vowels sound like when they occur before [h]. [eha?], [ẽha?], [oha?], and [õha], [e] and [ẽ] sound like a whispered [j], and [o] and [õ] sound like a whispered [w]. Furthermore, the [ã] in [ẽhã?] and [õhã] is nasalized because of [ẽ] and [õ]. The consonant before the nasalized vowel becomes voiceless.^[9] Also, odd-numbered vowels followed by [h] are devoiced, while even-numbered vowels followed by [h] are not.^[10]

Consonants

| | | <u>Alveolar</u> | <u>Post-alveolar</u> | <u>Palatal</u> | <u>Velar</u> | <u>Glottal</u> |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>Nasal</u> | | n | | | | |
| <u>Plosive</u> | <u>voiceless</u> | t | | | k | ? |
| | <u>voiced</u> | d | | | g | |
| <u>Affricate</u> | <u>voiceless</u> | ts | tʃ | | | |
| | <u>voiced</u> | | dʒ | | | |
| <u>Fricative</u> | | s | ʃ | | | h |
| <u>Approximant</u> | | ɹ | | j | w | |

[13]

Allophonic variations that occur in Cayuga:

/d/ becomes devoiced [t] before devoiced consonants. The sound [d] does not exist word-finally.^[14]

/g/ becomes devoiced [k] before devoiced consonants.

/s/ becomes [ʃ] before [j] or [ɹ].

/dʒ/ becomes [dz] and [ds] before [a] and [o], respectively. Speakers may use [dz] and [ds] interchangeably according to the speaker's preference.

/w/ can be voiceless (sounds like [h] followed by [w]).

/j/ can also be voiceless (sounds like [h] followed by [j])

/h/: "A vowel devoices if the vowel and a following [h] are in an odd-numbered syllable."^[14] For example: the [õ] in [ehjádõhkʷa?] ^[14]

The vowel is voiced when it and a following /h/ are in an even-numbered syllable and in "absolute word-initial position or in word-final position, or preceded by another [h]."^[14] For example:

[ʃehó:wih] 'tell her'

[ehjá:dõh] 'she writes'^[14]

Accent

Most words have accented vowels, resulting in a higher pitch.^[9] Where the stress is placed is dependent on the "position of the word in the phrase."^[9] The default location for stress for nouns is on final vowel. "In words that are at the end of a phrase, accent falls on the 2nd last vowel, the 3rd last vowel, or occasionally, on the 4th vowel from the end of the word."^[9] For example:

[negitsṍ: aga:tṍ:de?] 'I just heard it'^[15]

These sounds are long, especially in an even-numbered position. When nouns and verbs are not at the end of a phrase, accent is placed on the final vowel.^[9] For example:

[aga:tõ:de? tsõ: te? ni: ? dedé:gẽ: ?] 'I heard it, I didn't see it'^[15]

Morphosyntax

Cayuga is a polysynthetic language. As with other Iroquoian languages, the verbal template contains an optional prepronominal prefix, a pronominal prefix (indicating agreement), an optional incorporated noun, a verbal root, and an aspectual suffix. The nominal template consists of an agreement prefix (usually neuter for non-possessed nouns), the nominal root, and a suffix.

Notes

1. "Language Highlight Tables, 2016 Census - Aboriginal mother tongue, Aboriginal language spoken most often at home and Other Aboriginal language(s) spoken regularly at home for the population excluding institutional residents of Canada, provinces and territories, 2016 Census – 100% Data" (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/Table.cfm?Lang=E&T=41&Geo=01>). www12.statcan.gc.ca. Government of Canada. Retrieved 2017-11-23.
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Cayuga" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/cayu1261>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Six Nations Polytechnic (<http://www.snpolytechnic.com>)
4. "School fights to revive native Canadian language" (<https://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSN1448234720080215>). Reuters. 2008-02-15. Retrieved 2012-10-24.
5. "Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy - The CURA Project" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120802104021/http://www.cayugalanguage.ca/the-cool-project>). Archived from the original (<http://www.cayugalanguage.ca/the-cool-project>) on 2012-08-02. Retrieved 2012-10-25.
6. "Government of Canada Announces New Research Project to Revitalize Cayuga Language at Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve, Ontario" (<http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/Government-Canada-Announces-New-Research-Project-Revitalize-Cayuga-Language-Six-Nations-1291382.htm>). Marketwire. 2010-07-16. Retrieved 2012-10-24.
7. "Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy - Cayuga e-dictionary (Free Download)" (<http://www.cayugalanguage.ca/check-out-the-new-cayuga-e-dictionary>). Retrieved 2012-10-25.
8. Froman, Frances, Alfred Keye, Lottie Keye and Carrie Dyck. *English-Cayuga/Cayuga-English Dictionary*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, p. xii
9. Froman, 2002, p. xxxii
10. Froman, 2002, p. xxxi
11. Froman, 2002, p. xxx-xxxii
12. Froman, 2002, p. xxxii
13. Froman, 2002, p. xxxvi-xxxviii
14. Froman, 2002, p. xxxvi
15. Froman, 2002, p. xxxiii

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- Mithun, Marianne (1999). *The Languages of Native North America* (https://archive.org/details/osettaproject_esi_detail-1). Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-29875-X.
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Further reading

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- Dyck, Carrie, Frances Froman, Alfred Keye & Lottie Keye. *LIN 6050 Structure of Cayuga Course Package*. (http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~cdyck/LIN6050_W2014.htm/LIN_6050_course_package_COMPILED.pdf). Ms. Memorial University of NL and Woodland Cultural Centre.

External links

- [Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy \(COOL\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20070609043450/http://www.mun.ca/cayuga/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070609043450/http://www.mun.ca/cayuga/>)
- [Cayuga: Our Oral Legacy \(COOL\)\(NEW\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20120326050632/http://www.cayugalanguage.ca/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120326050632/http://www.cayugalanguage.ca/>)
- [Cayuga](http://www.languagegeek.com/rotinonhsonni/cayuga.html) (<http://www.languagegeek.com/rotinonhsonni/cayuga.html>) at LanguageGeek
- [Ohwejagehká: Ha'degaénage: Cayuga](https://web.archive.org/web/20130318033718/http://www.ohwejagehk.ca/cay-index.htm) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130318033718/http://www.ohwejagehk.ca/cay-index.htm>)
- [Sgéno' Ga\[?\]hnawiyo'geh! - How to say "hello" in Cayuga](https://web.archive.org/web/20070928225340/http://hello-oklahoma.benjaminbruce.com/cayuga.htm) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070928225340/http://hello-oklahoma.benjaminbruce.com/cayuga.htm>)
- "School fights to revive native Canadian language" (<https://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSN1448234720080215>). Reuters. 2008-02-15. Retrieved 2008-02-16.
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- [OLAC resources in and about the Cayuga language](http://www.language-archives.org/language/cay) (<http://www.language-archives.org/language/cay>)

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